

## Book Reviews

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**Quality Assurance in Dialysis.** 2nd Edition. Edited by Lee W Henderson and Richard S Thuma. Kluwer Academic Publishers; ISBN 0792352815; pp 301; £92.

Quality assurance is the hot issue in nephrology. In the 1980s attention was drawn to the importance of ensuring an adequate delivered dose of haemodialysis by data from the National Cooperative Dialysis Study in the United States, showing an inverse link between mortality and the amount of solute removed at each dialysis session. A growing awareness of quality, along with innovations such as erythropoietin therapy, has led to maintenance dialysis becoming a technique for enhancing rather than merely prolonging life. In the United Kingdom, the standards document of the Renal Association has defined a set of quality guidelines, rated according to best evidence, and the Renal Registry will enable units to monitor their performance in comparison to their peers. The nephrology group of the Cochrane Collaboration will help to define evidence for quality recommendations, although controlled trials in dialysis medicine remain rare. This whole area has assumed even more importance with the introduction of clinical governance.

This edition is an update of a title first published in 1994. The viewpoint is that of a commercial dialysis concern in the US and the editors and many chapter authors are associated with Baxter Healthcare Corporation. Nevertheless most of the topics are pertinent to the clinical practice of dialysis medicine in Europe.

At first glance it is not easy to discern the overall structure of the book. The preface does not make things much clearer. There are 26 individual chapters, not organised into sections. Broadly, the first ten chapters are mainly concerned with the methodology of defining and monitoring quality standards, including discussions of evidence based medicine, statistical methods, and outcome measures. The remaining chapters are directed more towards clinical practice. There are loose sections on predialysis patients, maintenance haemodialysis (including chapters on quality of life, selection of adequacy measures, dialysis water treatment and dialyzer reuse) and peritoneal dialysis, as well as two brief chapters on acute renal failure and renal transplantation.

It is a pity that, given the central theme of quality assurance, more attention has not been paid to the quality of language. The standard of the subediting is poor. There are many typographical errors, misspellings (*tendancy for tendency*) and malapropisms (*tenant for tenet*). Sentences are lengthy and unwieldy and full of jargon phrases. Frank errors of grammar and syntax are disappointingly common with verbs of incorrect number especially frequent. Some chapter titles are almost impossible to understand and some are ambiguous (despite first impressions, *Quality of Life Assurance in Hemodialysis* has nothing to do with what you get for the premiums paid to an insurance company). Sticklers may also wince at the frequent equivocal but a avoidable misdemeanours of style (split infinitives, small numbers appearing in the text as ciphers rather than words, singular verbs with Latin neuter plural subjects).

Although several of the chapters transcend these criticisms, there is a need for a better organised and better written book on this subject. In the meantime, despite its indigestibility, this volume will be essential reading for any renal physician with an interest in clinical governance; that is, every practising nephrologist.

P J GARRETT

**Human Cell Culture Volume II.** Edited by J R W Masters, B Palsson. Kluwer Academic Publishers. ISBN 0792358783. September 1999. £125. 375 pages.

This is the second volume in the three part Cancer Cell Lines component of the Human Cell Culture series. It contains chapters describing cell lines derived from some seventeen tumour types to add to the fourteen covered in the first volume.

The editors have done well to ensure a reasonably consistent approach by the contributing authors. Thus histopathology, clinical spectrum and molecular genetics are described for each cell line type. For each tumour included in this volume methods for establishing cells in culture are also described, although the detail is somewhat variable between chapters. Overall this volume does not serve as a laboratory manual for the establishment of human tumour cell lines. What it does admirably is to provide a comprehensive listing of cell lines currently available derived from the tumour types covered in this volume together with source references. Indeed, for some chapters a minor criticism might be that lengthy tables overshadow adoption of a more descriptive and critical approach in the text. The chapter covering head and neck cancers represents something of a tour de force, containing as it does approximately sixty pages of tables listing cell lines and their characteristics.

A major and often unsubstantiated criticism of the use of immortal cell lines in cancer research is that they are unrepresentative of the tumour from which they were derived. It is to the credit of the authors and editors that these criticisms are dealt with, primarily by emphasising the similarity in histopathology and molecular genetics of the tumour cell lines and the clinical specimens from which they were derived. A particularly important chapter in this regard compares a large series of new breast cancer cell lines with the corresponding tumour and shows that cell lines retain many phenotypic and genotypic features of the corresponding tumour for long periods of time.

This volume represents an excellent addition to an important series and can be recommended to post-graduates, post-doctoral fellows, MD students or clinicians considering using human tumour cell lines as experimental models.

P G JOHNSTON

**On the Study and Practice of Intravenous Anaesthesia.** Editors: Vyuk, Engers and Groen-Mulder. Kluwer Academic Publishers. ISBN 0 7923 6079 6. December 1999; £88; 285 pages.

This hardback book reports the proceedings of two meetings of the European Society for Intravenous Anaesthesia held in 1998 and 1999 with authors from Europe, USA and Japan.